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Testimony of Joseph J. Summers

Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing

March 8, 2016

Chairman Dargan, Chairman Larson, Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, for the record my name Joseph Summers from Hebron and I am here to testify in support of:

**SB-388 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES'
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF THE STATE BUILDING AND FIRE CODES**

I would like to thank the committee for raising this bill and the opportunity to submit testimony here today.

The statute states in part that the codes shall be revised as deemed necessary to incorporate any subsequent revisions to the code not later than eighteen months following the date of first publication of the subsequent revisions to the code. After Codes and Standards develops a draft of the proposed building code it generally takes 18-24 months to go through the approval process as it currently stands. So you can see that there is no way Codes and Standards can meet the eighteen month criteria as earlier stated. This proposed bill would expedite the review and approval process substantially and effectively provide greater property insurance credits within our state.

Some of the issues and concerns we are running into is the referenced standards in the currently adopted building code are outdated. Technology and construction means and methods have changed and will continue to change as new components come onto the market. Also, the 2003 edition of the I-Codes are currently out of print, which complicates our job in the review and enforcement of the building code. If an individual or a company wants to obtain a copy of the codes they either have to search the internet for copies or come into our office to review the publications.

Not staying more up-to-date in the adoption of a state building code greatly affects a municipalities ISO rating (insurance rates) since we are so far behind the eight ball. In Connecticut, many of the insurance carriers use the municipalities ISO rating in determining insurance credits for properties. Several years ago a representative from ISO visited Connecticut to update the ISO scores. As a result of that exercise most communities have a score of 7, 8 or 9 with 1 being the best as a result of Connecticut not being on the current model code.

When we receive an application for a chain store or a large corporation the majority of the time the construction documents are based on the current building code. This is done because the majority of the states are on a more current edition. They either have to revise the documents to meet the requirements of the building and fire codes we are currently on or apply for a modification from the state building inspector to use a more current edition. In either situation it delays projects and adds additional costs. To revise the construction documents costs the client time and money to have them revised. If the modification is granted it translates into a longer review times on the building official and fire marshal since we have to review the project on a set of documents we are not as familiar with and have to purchase the publications that the modification was approved for.

You will hear opponents to this bill state that ICC (publishers of the model codes) only want to sell code books. The majority of ICC's revenue does come from book sales, but if that was the only driving force then why does ISO look at a jurisdictions code cycle, why do manufacturers update their product line. The model building codes are not perfect. The model building codes and electrical code are updated every three years.

Anticipated adoption of the 2012 I-Codes w/2014 NEC realistically I see not before May 1, 2017 under the current approval process. The approval of this bill would see the adoption of a new state building code this year.

Our neighboring State of Massachusetts has what is referred to as the BBRS. The BBRS is a 11-member board which derives its authority to adopt regulations, administer provisions of the state building code and operate various construction related programs from Massachusetts General Laws. This board has the same function and responsibility as our Codes and Standards Committee and the biggest difference is once they have compiled the draft regulations the State Attorney General reviews it for compliance with Mass General Law. Then they hold a public hearing. After the closing of the public hearing they review and address the comments and amend the draft regulations as needed and then they are adopted as the building code. The do not go through the process of obtaining approval that is required in Connecticut under chapter 54.

Respectfully submitted,

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